



**Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine**  
*The unified voice for Maine's community behavioral health providers*

Malory Otteson Shaughnessy, Executive Director

**Testimony in support of LD 794**

**An Act to Maintain Maine's System of Therapeutic Foster Care for Children Through the Creation of a Nonprofit Risk Indemnification Trust**

Sponsored by Senator Heather Sanborn on May 5, 2021

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Good morning Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee On Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services. I am Malory Shaughnessy, a resident of Westbrook, and the Executive Director of the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services. Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Alliance in support of LD 794.

This bill came forth as a concept draft to begin the discussion about a growing concern within the field of child behavioral health. Agencies that contract with the DHHS to recruit, train, and support families to provide Therapeutic Foster Care within the Child Welfare System this year had a rude awakening when it was time to renew their liability insurance.

The cost for liability insurance in many cases was doubled or tripled. And it meant increases not only for the liability coverage for the treatment foster care, but for the umbrella insurance for the entire agency. This is happening across the country.

This is unsustainable.

At least one agency completely dropped this service rather than renew, others are holding on to see if we can work out some type of response that will help cover these increased costs, such as a risk indemnification trust, or a pass-through payment, or some other solution. Without some type of fix, we will lose this critical service in Maine.

The Office of Child and Family Services has partnered with several agencies that provide support to therapeutic resource parents. These are listed below:

- Woodfords Family Services
- Community Care
- Spurwink
- Community Health and Counseling Services
- KidsPeace
- AMHC

I have spoken with all of these providers and they are awaiting to see if a resolution will let them continue this service...or not.

We appreciate Senator Sanborn bringing this issue forward and we hope to work with the department to create an innovative way to address the problem.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

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*With 35 members, the **Alliance** is the state association for Maine's community based mental health and substance use treatment providers. The **Alliance** advocates for the implementation of sound policies and evidence-based practices that serve to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our behavioral health care system. All Mainers should have full access to the continuum of recovery-oriented systems of care for mental illness and substance use disorder – from prevention through treatment and into peer recovery support.*